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David Crockett Snell, Jr.

Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College

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A FOLLOW-UP STUDY ON THE STATUS OF FARMERS IN THE BURKEVILLE
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, NEWTON COUNTY,
TEXAS DURING THE PERIOD 1943-1953

By

David Crockett Snell, Jr.

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1958

Chairman: _____

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science
In The
Graduate Division
of
Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College
Prairie View, Texas

May, 1958

The W. R. Banks Library
Prairie View University
Prairie View, Texas

DEDICATION

The writer wishes to express his appreciation for the assistance given him by his parents, Mr. J. B. Powell and Dr. E. M. Norris for their untiring efforts and helpful suggestions. Without their guidance, this Thesis could not have been completed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer wishes to express his appreciation for the assistance given him by the farmers of the Burkeville Independent School District.

The writer is also deeply grateful to Mr. J. R. Powell and Dr. E. M. Norris for their untiring efforts and helpful suggestions. Without their guidance, this Thesis could not have been completed.

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CHAPTER I

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A favorable social and economic environment for farm people is an essential factor in the development of an efficient agricultural program.

Franklin¹ says:

"To readjust agriculture and place it upon a basis of greater profit, to reconstruct the rural home, and

¹Reck A. Franklin, *The A-M Story*. (Chicago: The Iowa State Press, 1942), p. 28.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In Southeast Texas, in the eastern part of Newton County, there is a school district known as Burkeville Independent School District. This district boasts of a population of approximately seven hundred and has an economy that is mainly agrarian in nature. The second ranking industry is the timber industry.

The main farm products are corn, cotton, potatoes, garden vegetables, sorghum, sugar cane and melons.

In this school district there are large family units, each having from five to fourteen members. There is a consolidated school, and children from eight surrounding communities commute daily by school buses. A large percentage finish high school but there are absentees shown in the principal's office by boys and girls who stay home to assist with duties of the home and farm work. This is because the father is the chief wage earner and the budget must be planned wisely in order that the family may be properly fed, clothed and a few of the available modern conveniences enjoyed.

A favorable social and economic environment for farm people is an essential factor in the development of an efficient agricultural program.

Franklin¹ says:

"To readjust agriculture and place it upon a basis of greater profit, to reconstruct the rural home, and

¹Reck M. Franklin, The 4-H Story. (Chicago: The Iowa State Press, 1942), p. 28.

to give country life more dignity was the main purpose A. D. Graham had in mind when he organized 4-H Club work for boys and girls in the State of Ohio in 1905."

Deyoe¹ further explains:

"A broadened program of supervised farming and related activities are worthy of consideration because it serves as a basis for instruction which has the outcome of development of persons for proficiency in the vocation of farming and the improvement of farm life."

The writer chose this problem for investigation for the reasons as stated above.

Statement of the Problem. The writer proposed to determine from available records and documents the types of activities characterizing the farm program in Burkeville Independent School District from 1943 until 1953, and further to relate the status of farmers in the promotion of farming and farm life.

Purpose of the Study. After fourteen years of vocational agriculture instruction in the Wiergate High School of Burkeville Independent School District, the writer deems it necessary to answer the following questions:

1. What is the status of home ownership among farmers in Burkeville Independent School District?
2. To what extent is the major income for farmers derived from farming?
3. What is the status of the live at home program practiced by the farmers in Burkeville Independent School District?
4. What general crops are grown and to what extent?

¹George P. Deyoe, Supervised Farming in Vocational Agriculture. Danville: The Interstate Printers Publishers, 1946), p. 52.

Scope of Study. This study is based on information collected from forty farmers covering the period from 1943 to 1953. The scope of the study includes the eight communities in the Burkeville Independent School District, which is located in the extreme Southeast portion of Newton County, Texas where farming is becoming the leading occupation for many of the people.

Source of Data. The writer made a descriptive study through questionnaires of the farmers from 1943 to 1953. Data for the study were secured from the following sources: (1) Newton County Clerk's Office; (2) the office files of the Newton County Farm Agent; (3) the District Commissioners' Court records; (4) information gathered from the W. R. Banks Library, Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College; (5) questionnaires from farmers in Burkeville Independent School District; (6) People's Merchants Association Office; and (7) personal interviews with farmers of the district.

Criteria for Selection. The following criteria were decided upon for selecting farmers to survey for this study:

1. To be selected a farmer must have been a successful farmer.
2. A resident farmer of the Burkeville Independent School District during the ten year period.
3. He must have been exposed to some form of agricultural instruction.

Tabulation of Data. In order to get a true picture of the activities of the survey, a plan was devised whereby the inquiry forms from the farmers were grouped separately and entered

on a summary sheet designed for recording all necessary information to be included in the survey.

Data contained in forty complete questionnaires which furnished information regarding the occupation, distribution, and status in farming of forty adults engaged in farming in Burkeville Independent School District, were used as a basis for the analysis which will be shown in the Tables that will follow.

A general summary of the forty farmers surveyed was compiled, and the information entered on the tabulation sheet. Since all of the farmers surveyed were visited by the writer, necessary information and corrections were made during the visit to avoid having to make another trip to the farmer's homes.

Related Studies. Mr. J. B. Dorman, County Agent of Newton County, made a study of the farming situation in Newton County of which both white and Negro farmers were studied. He gave a brief review of the farming situation in the county. This study revealed that the farm population has been on a decline since World War I, while home ownership and the average size of farms have increased. The type of farming had changed from cotton farming to general farming, and livestock on small scales.¹

Mr. Joseph T. Hudson, a teacher in Birmingham, Alabama, made a study of some five hundred former Negro students of vocational agriculture in Alabama to determine: (1) the proportion of Negro former pupils of vocational agriculture who are actually

¹J. B. Dorman, "A Historical Study of the Farming Situation in Newton County 1924," Bachelor's Thesis, A. and M. College, College Station, Texas.

farming, or in occupations related to agriculture; and (2) the farming status of former Negro pupils of vocational agriculture in Alabama. He also wanted to discover some facts that would aid in setting up a guidance program in vocational agriculture.¹

Definition of Terms. The term specialization allows a person to become more skillful at doing a few things, and hence increases their efficiency.

Economic problem. An economic problem is to obtain the greatest possible return from resources.

Fixed capital or equipment. This term signifies those man-made goods which are normally used for a considerable time before they are worn out or their usefulness is exhausted.

Farm unit plan. A plan that yields a maximum net income to provide a comfortable living over a period of years is known as a farm unit plan.

A farm is an acreage of three or more, that yields one hundred dollars annually from agricultural products, exclusive of home garden.

Land owned. Land owned includes all land that the operator or his wife, or both, hold under title, purchase contract, homestead law, or as one of the heirs, or as a trustee of an undivided estate.

Farm operator is a person who operates a farm, either by performing the labor himself or supervising it directly.

¹Joseph T. Hudson, "A Study of 500 Former Negro Students of Vocational Agriculture in Alabama," Master's Thesis, Michigan State College, 1949.

CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

It is sufficient to suggest that sometimes man more nearly reveals the truth unconsciously through physical objects or remains left behind than through documents which he records.

The following Tables present findings as the writer actually found them.

TABLE I

Number and Percentage of Farmers Studied
Owning Homes From 1943 - 1953

YEARS	NUMBER OWNING HOMES	PERCENTAGE
1943-1946	32	80
1946-1950	36	90
1950-1953	40	100

Table I shows that from 1943 to 1953, home ownership gradually increased. This probably could have been due to the war situation. Since increased ownership is indicated, it is possible for the county Extension Service, Soil Conservation and People's Merchant Association to assist farmers in securing financial aid and encourage them to further develop their farm homes, to make any improvement that might be an asset to home ownership and community improvement.

TABLE II

Total Acreage and Average Acreage Owned by Farmers
In Burkeville Independent School
District From 1943 - 1953

SIZE IN YEARS	TOTAL ACRES OWNED	AVERAGE ACRES OWNED
1943 - 1946	1,734	43.3
1946 - 1950	1,945	48.6
1950 - 1953	2,183	54.6

Table II shows that the average acres owned by the farmers studied are 54.6 percent. This reveals that the farm is too small for the farmer to grow enough food and feed for the family and livestock consumption.

Another criterion for judging the success of a farmer is the number of improved practices that an individual is using on the farm. The use of such improved practices as terracing on land, planting of winter legumes, rotation of crops, applying phosphate, growing of cover crops and mowing pastures not only mean money to the farmer, but they also set an example for others in the community and indicates progress.

Table III, which follows, shows the number of improved practices used by the forty farmers studied in Burkeville Independent School District from 1943 to 1953. In accordance with this Table, there is plenty of work to be done toward awakening the farmers to the extent that they will recognize the importance of improved practices and put them into use.

TABLE III

Number of Improved Practices Followed By the Farmers

PRACTICES	NUMBER OF FARMERS FOLLOWING PRACTICES	NUMBER ACRES IN PRACTICES
Terracing	8	295
Planting winter legumes	38	689
Mowing pasture	4	35
Saving and Using Barnyard manure	34	320
Rotation of crops	40	875
Growing cover crops	27	725
Improving pasture	13	250

The farmers in this study are located in the southeast sandy land area of Texas where such crops as corn, cotton and vegetables are best adapted. This area of Texas has sandy soil, irregular shaped fields and small tools.¹

Table IV shows that in Burkeville Independent School District most of the people are engaged in general farming, and that some of the farmers are growing truck crops to an extent. It would mean much to farmers in Burkeville Independent School District if they would grow more truck crops. This would help with the family's income as well as furnish fresh vegetables for home use.

¹Texas Almanac, (Dallas, Texas: Dallas Morning News, 1951), p. 587.

TABLE IV

Number and Acreage of General Crops Grown By Farmers
in Burkeville Independent School District

CROPS	NUMBER OF PERSONS PRODUCING CROPS	TOTAL ACREAGE
Cotton	35	341
Corn	37	307½
Oats	19	30
Peas	39	94½
Beans	31	76
Sugar cane	28	32
Sorghum	7	8
White potatoes	36	50½
Sweet potatoes	36	55
Tomatoes	31	65½
Melons	36	74

TABLE V

Number of Livestock Processed by the
Farmers Over the Ten Years

LIVESTOCK PRODUCED	OWNERS	NUMBER OWNED
Poultry	40	6830
Hogs	39	1840
Beef (cows)	34	1310
Dairy (cows)	36	630
Horses	30	470
Mules	31	320

Table V shows that thirty nine persons of the number surveyed produced hogs. This indicate that most of the families should have a good supply of pork on the farm. It also indicates that poultry is being produced by the forty farmers surveyed from which the family will have eggs and poultry as needed, also milk and beef should be taken care of for family consumption.

The agriculture teacher and county extension worker should be greatly concerned about the type and breed of livestock produced. Breed and type may be encouraged through vocational agriculture and adult demonstration for the farmers in the Burkeville Independent School District.

TABLE VI

Number of Farmers Receiving Their Major Income
From Livestock and Field Crop Farming
In Burkeville Independent
School District

YEAR	MAJOR INCOME FROM FIELD CROPS	MAJOR INCOME FROM LIVESTOCK
1943 - 1946	25	15
1946 - 1950	29	11
1950 - 1953	21	19

Table VI shows the number of farmers out of forty studied receiving some of their income from livestock and field crops. It is also shown in Table VI that from 1943 to 1956, field crop farming began to decrease many farmers turned

their field crop land into pastures for livestock.

In order to meet the financial need of an inflated era, the farmer must turn his attention toward producing a living at home. The farmer must know that the family's health and good family life are dependent upon the amount of food and livestock that is produced. They then must turn their attention toward producing a living at home.¹

It should be the desire of every farmer to do his share in establishing in the community a progressive program. The writer sees no reason why the farmers will not become more efficient in their farming program if such progressive program is followed.

TABLE VII

Status of the Live-at-Home Program Among Farmers
In Burkeville Independent School District

PRODUCT	NUMBER OF FARMERS	AMOUNT PRODUCED	SALE VALUE IN MONEY	AMOUNT USED IN VALUE BY FAMILY
Milk	35	20,104 gals.	\$3175.40	\$5004.11
Meat	39	11,173 lbs.	1660.72	3236.74
Butter	36	5,116 lbs.	872.84	1671.43
Eggs	39	79,414 doz.	1033.94	1625.16
Beans	32	3,045 bu.	286.64	1203.36
Peas	39	4,920 bu.	3128.32	2276.06
White potatoes	35	2,865 bu.	3453.58	1852.66
Sweet potatoes	39	2,085 bu.	3808.34	3579.91
Tomatoes	35	2,460 bu.	3786.66	2043.00
Melons	35	4,810 lbs.	1737.20	1169.94
Sugar cane syrup	27	2,990 gals.	2690.34	1894.94

¹W. E. Lowry, "Live-At-Home Program," Farm and Family Life. (Austin: State Board for Vocational Education, Bulletin No. 498, 1948), 48.

Table VII revealed milk per gallon \$.41, meat per pound \$.32, butter \$.49 per pound, eggs \$.35 per dozen, beans \$1.33 per bushel, peas \$1.09 per bushel, white potatoes \$1.85 per bushel, sweet potatoes \$3.54 per bushel, tomatoes \$ 2.37 per bushel, melons \$.06 per pound, and syrup \$1.53 per gallon. The writer found in the ten year period the farmers sold more than was consumed. Graded total consumed by families valued \$25,500.01. Grand total of sale value was \$28,333.88-- a difference of \$2,833.87.

TABLE VIII

The Value of Machinery and Equipment of the Farmers At Purchasing Time and Present Value From 1943-1953

ITEMS	VALUE AT PURCHASING TIME	PRESENT VALUE
Wagons	\$ 3337.00	\$ 1749.00
Harrows	372.00	183.00
Rollers	0	0
Stalk cutters	700.00	254.00
Planters	845.00	474.00
Mowers	0	0
Cultivators	835.00	474.00
Sprayers	0	0
Tractors	10,725.00	3750.00
Trucks	27,570.00	8325.00
Automobiles	2,333.00	19685.00

Table VIII shows present value and value at purchasing time. Depreciation of the farm machinery and equipment amounts to a considerable sum. Therefore, it is well to keep them in top shape and well preserved during the time they are not in use.

Farm machinery and equipment is very valuable to any farmer, because without the proper type and kind the farmer cannot do a good job of farming.

From data gathered from the forty farmers, the writer found seventy percent of the farmers' houses painted; one hundred percent doors screened and 97.5 percent had glass windows but un-screened. The writer finds that there should be an improvement in the exterior of the homes. A brief of the interior showed inadequate number of rooms for privacy. Fifteen percent had pianos; 72.5 percent of the farm homes had gas ranges and deep freezers, 60 percent had book cases, 71.25 percent had refrigerators and 100 percent had electricity.

Seven families had running water and five had indoor toilets with baths. Most farm homes used open wells or springs from which they secured water.

The writer found that food preservation was one of the major projects carried on during the vegetable season, as each family investigated had grown garden vegetables 100 percent.

The study also revealed that loans were secured to carry on their farming. The loan agencies used by the farmers were found to be: merchant, 5 percent; banks, 10 percent; and farm government loans, 57.5 percent.

For effective farming, the farmer will have to take more advantages of such loans to produce better crops for greater incomes for their families.

A program designed to improve these conditions must also make provisions for activities that will increase the knowledge of the people concerning practices and that will develop worth-

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study revealed that of the forty farmers studied, thirty of them had received organized instruction through result and method demonstrations given to them from time to time in their respective communities.

In order to determine the status of these forty farmers in the Burkeville Independent School District, a study was made of the types of programs from which many had received instruction through the Extension Service and the vocational agriculture teacher.

Forty farmers were found to be engaged in general farming, with a major portion of their incomes derived from field crops and livestock.

The data were analyzed in eight tables, and the following problems were revealed:

1. There was a decrease in population accompanied by an increase in home ownership.
2. The farmers were inadequately equipped.
3. Improved practices on farms were carried out by a small percentage.
4. There were too many farmers engaged in general farming.

A program designed to improve these conditions must also make provisions for activities that will increase the knowledge of the people concerning practices and that will develop worthwhile agricultural problems, which arise in the local, county and state agricultural situations as well.

while skills. The farm program must guide individuals toward definite outcomes, such as:

1. Helping persons to become progressively established and increasingly proficient in farming.
2. Help persons to formulate production goals and other goals of achievement appropriate for his situation.
3. To meet immediate needs and remote needs as nearly as possible.
4. To keep records of accomplishments to refer to for valuable guidance.

Conclusions

On the basis of information revealed in this study, there is a great opportunity for training through organized instruction for the farmers through the vocational agriculture teacher and the county extension agent. The use of such improved practices as terracing of farm land, planting of winter legumes, rotation of crops, growing of cover crops, and mowing of pastures not only mean money to the farmers, but they also set an example for others in the community and indicate progress. Many farmers are still experiencing low incomes, because they are inclined to follow the old traditional methods.

Recommendations

1. Each community should be made conscious of all current agricultural problems, which arise in the local, county and state agricultural situations as well.

2. All farmers who are engaged in general farming should be organized into a farm unit plan.

3. The vocational agriculture teacher and county agent should devote more time and attention to encouraging farmers to produce and care for their livestock for more and better profits.

4. The scope of instruction should be planned so that a margin of profit may be realized by the farmers.

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORTY FARMERS OF BURKEVILLE INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT, BURKEVILLE, NEWTON COUNTY, TEXAS

This information is to be used in making a follow-up study of the status of the farmers from 1943 to 1953, of Burkeville Independent School District, Burkeville, Newton County, Texas.

Name: _____ Address: _____

Date: _____

1. Farm operator _____ Total acres _____ Acres owned _____
2. Total number in family _____; men _____, women _____;
boys _____, girls _____
3. Total number in family that work on the farm _____

APPENDIX

4. Name of school attended _____

Circle the grades you completed in school: 1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8 9 10 11 12

5. Date graduated from high school _____

6. Other training _____

7. Are you a member of the community council in your community?

8. What kind of farming do you do? General _____, Specialized _____

9. How long have you lived on this farm? Months _____ Years _____

10. Check the improved practices that you have carried out on this farm.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| a. terracing farm land _____ | f. improving pasture by _____ |
| b. planting winter legumes _____ | proper seeding and _____ |
| c. moving pasture _____ | proper pasture mixture _____ |
| d. rotation crops _____ | g. growing a green cover _____ |
| e. saving and using barn- _____
yard manure _____ | crop _____ |

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORTY FARMERS OF BURKEVILLE INDEPENDENT
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Circle the grades you completed in school: 1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8 9 10 11 12

5. Date graduated from high school _____

6. Other training _____

7. Are you a member of the community council in your community?

8. What kind of farming do you do? General _____, Specialized

9. How long have you lived on this farm? Months _____ Years _____

10. Check the improved practices that you have carried out on this farm.

a. terracing farm land _____
b. planting winter legumes _____
c. moving pasture _____
d. rotation crops _____
e. saving and using barn-
yard manure _____

f. improving pasture by _____
proper seeding and
proper pasture mixture
g. growing a green cover
crop _____

11. The home: Fill in the following blanks.

- _____ a. Number of rooms
- _____ b. Is home painted?
- _____ c. Are doors screened?
- _____ d. Glass panes in windows
- _____ e. Number of chairs

12. Check the following in your home.

- _____ a. Piano
- _____ b. Ice box
- _____ c. Radio
- _____ d. Book case
- _____ e. Refrigerator
- _____ f. Bath tub
- _____ g. Deep freeze
- _____ h. Running water
- _____ i. Indoor toilets
- _____ j. Gas range
- _____ k. Gas
- _____ l. Electricity

13. Do you have a home garden? _____ Check the vegetables grown.

- | | | | | |
|------------|------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| Harrow | a. cabbage | _____ | f. collards | _____ |
| Roller | b. onions | _____ | g. tomatoes | _____ |
| Stalk | c. beans | _____ | h. okra | _____ |
| Planter | d. beets | _____ | i. sweet corn | _____ |
| Mower | e. peas | _____ | j. spinach | _____ |
| Cultivator | | | | |

14. What do you consider your major source of income? _____

15. Do you have to borrow money to carry on your farming? If so, approximately how much each year? _____

Check the proper one or ones.

- _____ a. personal
 _____ b. merchants
 _____ c. banks
 _____ d. individual
 _____ e. farm loan

Livestock and Livestock Products

16. <u>Items</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Sale Value</u>	<u>Amount Used By Family</u>
Milk	_____	_____	_____
Meat	_____	_____	_____
Butter	_____	_____	_____
Eggs	_____	_____	_____
Mules	_____	_____	_____
Horses	_____	_____	_____
Chickens	_____	_____	_____

Machinery and Equipment

17. <u>Items</u>	<u>Value at Purchasing Time</u>	<u>Present Value</u>
Wagon	_____	_____
Harrow	_____	_____
Rollers	_____	_____
Stalk cutter	_____	_____
Planter	_____	_____
Mowers	_____	_____
Cultivators	_____	_____
Sprayers	_____	_____
Tractor	_____	_____
Truck	_____	_____
Automobile	_____	_____

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19. Farm Products

CROPS	ACRES	YIELD	AMOUNT SOLD	AMOUNT USED AT HOME
Corn				
Cotton				
Oats				
Beans				
Sugar cane				
Peas				
Sorghum				
White potatoes				
Sweet potatoes				
Tomatoes				
Melons				